



Representative

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2001 Legislative Update

7th District

Pend Oreille, Stevens, Ferry, Lincoln, Okanogan & Spokane counties

Dear Friends,

As I begin to reflect back on my first year as a co-chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, I think of the important and controversial issues we tackled this year. We discussed legislation on salmon, forests and parks.

Because the House of Representatives is tied with 49 Republicans and 49 Democrats, my co-chair and I had to agree before any bill was heard before the full committee. We worked well together on most issues. However, Democrats on my committee were able to kill Senate Bill 5024, a bill prohibiting the Parks and Recreation Commission from charging day-use fees at state parks. I don't agree with these day-use fees for our state parks. There is still a possibility to bring the bill directly to the House floor, but this remains difficult in the 49-49 tie.

In addition to the Natural Resource Committee, I serve as a member of the House Agriculture and Ecology Committee and the House Transportation Committee. The combination of these assignments allows me an additional opportunity to work on legislation that directly affects the people of Eastern Washington. This report highlights the bills that will directly impact the 7th District. Many are awaiting action by the governor.

If you have any questions about the issues being addressed in the Legislature, please contact my Olympia office. I look forward to hearing your opinion on these critical issues.

Bob Sump
State Representative

Regional Transportation Solutions

State lawmakers face a difficult task of writing a two-year operating budget this year. We will be talking about that budget, and transportation issues, as we convene our special session.

Just prior to the beginning of the 2001 session, I was appointed to a seat on the House Transportation Committee, the group responsible for writing a two-year transportation budget. We have some serious issues to resolve, and I believe the emphasis must be on regional solutions.

The concept of regionalization means the state would give taxing authority to specific regions for funding local transportation projects of statewide significance, allowing highly congested parts of the state to address their own unique situations. I support this idea, but believe all levels of government must become more accountable to the voters, including any regional transportation authority.

Eastern and Western Washington face equally important, but vastly different transportation needs. The state has used a 'one-size-fits-all' method to solving problems too many times. Whether it's natural resources, growth management or transportation, we must examine how legislative decisions affect all state residents and develop a solution that meets the needs of our state.

I believe those decisions must include more than just the obvious. It would be easy to just propose a tax increase and then pat ourselves on the back for a job well done. That's not the way I do business.

Before deciding what to build, we must look at how we build it. It's time to change the status quo by making the commitment to fix how the Department of Transportation does business. We have a responsibility to the taxpayers to find ways to stretch the funds and maximize our investments while not placing the burden of Seattle congestion on the backs of Eastern Washington residents.

Achievements for Northeastern Washington

Investing In...

Agriculture

Concerted action by the state is needed to find new markets for agriculture and to overcome barriers erected by other countries despite expanding free trade agreements. This bill will establish a market development and promotion fund through the Department of Agriculture for Washington’s second-largest industry. We are still reeling from the expanded prominence of Asian markets, businesses not required to operate under Washington’s strict standards.

Environment

The state’s Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee studied the amount of funding various agencies dedicate to environment, energy and water programs. This legislation mandates the findings of JLARC by ensuring that state funds are dispersed to programs that have set goals and utilize outcome-based evaluation. It also provides another tool to determine the effectiveness of existing environmental programs.

Fire Protection

Especially in this year of near-record low rainfall amount, we must be diligent about preventing forest fires. This will provide funding to keep small fires from growing out of control. Local fire districts don’t have the resources to respond and need help from the Department of Natural Resources. Sufficient funds will be made available to allow DNR to provide this service to local landowners.

Small Forest Landowners

This legislation will help timber owners being harmed by the Forest and Fish Act by requiring the amount of compensation offered to small forest landowners for a riparian easement to include the compliance costs for participating in the program. Compliance costs include the cost of preparing and recording the easement, and any business and occupation tax and/or real estate excise tax imposed.

Changing Outdoor Burning Provisions

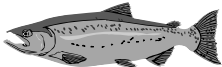
As cities are forced to designate their urban growth areas under the Growth Management Act, many have lost the legal right to burn outdoors on their property. Final authority to decide outdoor burning issues should be at the local level. House Bill 1034 would have allowed local authorities to exempt residents within their urban growth areas if the area meets certain specification regarding population and air quality. We ran out of time before the House was allowed a vote on the Senate amendments but I will introduce the measure in 2002.

Growing Trees on Agricultural Land

This legislation was at the request of a Republic resident, but it was also tied up in the Senate. It will be a priority in 2002. The price of wood chips has dropped from previous levels due to the economic decline in Asia. This bill would extend the exemption to 15 years for trees cultivated by agricultural methods, allowing greater market flexibility. It would also bring U.S. farmers in line with our Canadian neighbors.

Using Viable Salmon Eggs

House Bill 1286 requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to stop killing hatchery salmon for the purpose of destroying the eggs. The state kills these salmon in order to stop them from breeding with wild salmon. I don’t agree with its theory that wild salmon are superior to hatchery salmon. Wild salmon may have superior survival skills, but the large number of hatchery salmon makes up for the lower survival rate. Plus, hatcheries are implementing methods to enable hatchery salmon to survive. This legislation would require Fish and Wildlife to give the salmon and eggs to tribes or fish enhancement groups who work to replenish the fish runs in our state.



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